

Activity 1: Investigation

The setting of "To Build a Fire" is the Yukon, an arctic territory known for its frozen and inhospitable climate. Despite the harsh climate, a variety of animals, from grizzly bears to salamanders, survive and reproduce in the Yukon and nearby Alaska. However, the arctic climate is changing, threatening to their survival.

Use the Internet, an atlas, or other resources to access the following information about the setting of London's story:

- Look up information about the climate in this area. How does the climate vary throughout the year?
- What wildlife is native to the Yukon and Alaskan climate?
- What data can you find about arctic climate change in the last 20 years?
- How are the arctic species being affected by this change?
- What measures can be taken to protect them?

Design a brochure in which you present the result of your research.

Activity 2: Analyzing Errors

The old-timer on Sulphur Creek had warned the man not to travel alone when the temperature was at or lower than 50°F below zero. The man ignores this advice and, once he gets his second fire going, congratulates himself for proving the old man wrong, saying, "Any man who was a man could travel alone." But the man goes on to make several mistakes. For example, he builds the second fire under a tree, from which snow falls, extinguishing the fire. The man made this mistake because he was lazy: "But it had been easier to pull the twigs from the brush and drop them directly on the fire."

From the author's description, you can infer that the character is not thinking clearly. What other errors does he make?

- Make a two-column chart in which you give examples of the man's errors in the first column and, in the second column, explain why he made each mistake.
- Finally, choose one error that you think significantly contributed to the protagonist's death, and describe how he might have improved his chance of survival if he had been thinking clearly.